

THE northern

The Official Voice of
VA Northern California Health Care System

Veteran Strong

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Yes! One Person Can Make a Difference

Photographer: Jon-Nolan Paresa

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When people meet Suzi Vinci in the halls of the Sacramento VA Medical Center, they know in an instant that she takes being a Veterans County Service Officer (VSO) very seriously.

In Fall 2015, Suzi received a grant from the California Department of Veterans Affairs that allowed her to come to the VA Sacramento campus two days a month to process claims for Veterans. She is one of three female VSOs in the area, and she is very popular with patients and staff alike.

Suzi's work often involves the more complex claim cases. Many of the Veterans she works with have military sexual trauma or deep emotional and physical concerns that make going to an ordinary public office difficult or impossible.

"I am hopeful to see how these claims unfold," said Suzi. "I anticipate there will be a lot of positive outcomes, either resolved or granted monetary benefits."

During her 11 months at VA Sacramento, she has seen the results of her hard work. She alone has processed nearly 100 cases, of which 14 claims have been granted and 11 have received monetary benefits. Suzi's work and attitude just go to show that one person really can make a difference.

If you would like to schedule an appointment to meet with Suzi, please contact Rebecca Stallworth at rebecca.stallworth@va.gov.

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Spa Day Excursion

Women Veterans Come Together to Heal Mind, Body, and Soul

By Charlene Wetmore, Public Affairs Volunteer



On a beautiful Saturday morning, two large buses carrying nearly a hundred Women Veterans make their way to a complimentary spa day hosted by Women's Health at VA Northern California Health Care System and other partnering organizations.

Once the buses arrive, each woman, varying in age, physical ability, and emotional needs, is welcomed into a bank of cheerful faces and loving embraces. The women register, eat breakfast, meet up with new and old friends, and then they are off to start their day full of classes hosted by experts in a variety of holistic health arenas.

Complimentary classes range from stress management, meditation, and essential oils to equine therapy and herbal tea making. Next to the lake, some women participate in yoga, while others receive massages under the shade of an oak tree. All classes were designed to help Women Veterans manage daily stressors and relieve areas of pain and tension in their bodies.

After a long day at the ranch, it is time to say goodbye and head back to Sacramento. The women board the bus one by one, smiling as they praise the day's event as the "best event ever" and exclaim "what an awesome time!"

VA Northern California Women's Health Program is dedicated to offering Women Veterans an emotional and physical outlet to express themselves with like-minded individuals. If you are interested in knowing more about our events or registering with Women's Health at VA Northern California Health Care System, email Rebecca Stallworth at rebecca.stallworth@va.gov.

Veteran Strong

By Jeff Fortner, Public Affairs Specialist

Leaving military service can pose challenges for the men and women who have served. Re-entry into civilian life often raises many questions for Veterans: How well does your military career translate into one in the private sector? Where will you live? What are your health care options? What if the adjustment period is difficult? The Department of Veterans Affairs and the VA Northern California Health Care System offer personalized guidance to help Veterans get answers and make a successful transition.



Because of your honorable service to our nation, you've earned world-class medical care through the nation's largest integrated health system. The VA has 1,700 different sites of care nationwide, of which 11 are right here in Northern California. VA Northern California offers a wide array of care and services—from seeing your personal physician to receiving specialty care, including mental health care (e.g., Veteran-specific treatment for PTSD, TBI), outpatient pharmacy, geriatric care, orthopedics, women's health, and more. With the added ease of programs like

MyHealtheVet, managing your health care will be convenient. We are here for you!

At VA Northern California, we are your healthy home and here to assist with your transition and deliver what you've earned. We are here to help you be **#Veteranstrong**.

Resources

<http://www.northerncalifornia.va.gov/>

<http://www.va.gov/>

<http://explore.va.gov/share/now-that-you-are-home>

If you have any questions about Veterans' benefits, please call 1-800-827-1000.

Meet Some of Our Veterans



Alex serves in the Air Force Reserve as a logistician with deployments to Afghanistan and Southwest Asia. He received his bachelor's degree from Sacramento State and works as a recruiter for a major social networking company.



Summer has been serving in the Army for more than 13 years. She has worked as a wheeled vehicle mechanic with two tours in Iraq. Currently working as an Army recruiter, she is also working toward a bachelor's degree in marketing.



John served in the Army for three years with posts in Texas and Hawaii. He has worked in the heating and air-conditioning industry for almost 27 years. As a volunteer for the Veteran and Family Life Council here at VA NorCal, John and other council members take part in Rapid Process Improvement events such as the patient check-in experience, parking, wheelchair spots in the waiting rooms, signage, advertisements, and much more.



Aubrey served four years on Active Duty as a naval surface warfare officer. She currently serves as a reserve public affairs officer in Washington, D.C. She is a foster parent and a property manager and makes her home in Cincinnati, Ohio.



Janaire serves in the Army National Guard as a logistician with a deployment to Afghanistan. She received her bachelor's degree from Mary Baldwin University and will complete her master's degree in social work in May 2017 from Ohio State University.



Chris served in the Marine Corps during Operations Desert Shield and Storm. After returning to Northern California, Chris went to Sacramento State. A recent graduate with a master's degree in education, he now teaches special education and participates in different bicycle racing events in the Sacramento area.



Terrence retired from the Army in August of this year, after serving 20 years as a public affairs specialist. During his career he served in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom and concluded his career as the public affairs advisor to the senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. He is currently completing his master's degree in strategic communication from Tory University and works as a public affairs specialist for the Department of Army Public Affairs.



John H. is a Marine Corps combat veteran of the war in Iraq, where he served as a public affairs specialist. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland and works as the national communications director for AMVETS (American Veterans).

Get Your Flu Shot Now!

Every flu season is different. Because flu viruses change constantly, getting an annual flu vaccine is the best way to stay protected the entire flu season. Veterans can get free flu shots at their local VA health facility. Veterans do not need to make an appointment and can receive a flu shot on a walk-in basis. Clinic locations and hours are provided below, along with great tips for fending off the flu.

6 Ways to Prevent Seasonal Flu



1. Take time to get your seasonal flu shot.

The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine each season!



2. Know how the flu is spread.

When a person with the flu sneezes, coughs, talks, or laughs, the flu virus can spread into the air as droplets; the droplets can spread to people and surfaces up to six feet away. The flu virus can also spread to your hands if you touch anything that has the virus on it; then if you touch your eyes, nose, or mouth, you might get the flu. People can spread the flu to others starting about one day before they feel sick and up to five days after getting sick.



3. Know the symptoms of the flu.

Symptoms include a fever (100°F body temperature or higher), body and muscle aches, headache, feeling tired or weak, a cough, a sore throat, and a runny or stuffy nose.



4. Clean your hands & surfaces.

Clean your hands often by washing with soap and water or by using hand sanitizers. Clean your hands before eating or preparing food, before and after caring for someone who is sick, after coughing or sneezing, and after using the bathroom. Clean surfaces that are touched often, such as phones, faucets, light switches, countertops, door and cabinet handles, keyboard and mouse, and TV remotes. The flu virus can live on surfaces for up to 48 hours.



5. Cover your coughs & sneezes.

Use clean tissues and discard after each use. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve when you don't have a tissue. Always clean your hands after coughing or sneezing.



6. Stay at home when sick.

Because the flu spreads easily from person to person, stay home when you are sick. Studies show you are most contagious and likely to spread the flu virus to others for at least five days after your first symptoms start and for at least 48 hours after your last fever.

Walk-In Flu Shot Clinics—Locations & Hours

Chico Clinic

Monday–Thursday: 3 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

Fairfield Clinic

Monday–Friday: 9 a.m.–noon,
1:30 p.m.–4 p.m.

Mare Island Clinic

Monday–Friday: 9 a.m.–noon,
1:30 p.m.–4 p.m.

Martinez Clinic

Monday–Friday: 8:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.,
12:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.

McClellan Clinic

Monday–Friday: 8:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.,
1 p.m.–3:30 p.m.

Oakland Clinic

Monday–Friday: 9 a.m.–11:30 a.m.,
1 p.m.–3:30 p.m.

Redding Clinic


Monday–Friday: 8:30 a.m.–11 a.m.,
1:30 p.m.–4 p.m.

Sacramento/Mather

Monday–Friday: 8 a.m.–noon, 1 p.m.–4 p.m.
(Primary Care Section C)

Yuba City Clinic

Tuesday: 9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
Wednesday: 9 a.m.–11 a.m.
Friday: 9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3:30 p.m.



Veterans Can Now Schedule Optometry and Audiology Appointments

No Referral Needed

Veterans can now schedule optometry and audiology appointments without a referral from their primary care doctor.

For more information or to schedule an appointment today, please call:

1-800-382-8387

Healthy Recipe!

Chef Jeff's Simple Winter Kebabs

Serving size: 4 kebabs

Calories: 487

Protein: 93.2 g

Fat: 9.4 g

Carbohydrates: 5.8 g

Ingredients

- 1 bottle Italian dressing
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 3 large zucchini
- 2 lemons
- Salt and pepper
- Kebab skewers

Directions

1. Rinse off the chicken in cold water and place in large bowl. Add three-quarters of the Italian dressing, ensuring the chicken is fully coated. Cut lemons into quarters.
2. Rinse the zucchini. Cut off the ends and cut into quarter-inch circles. Pour the rest of the dressing into a bowl. Put the zucchini circles in the bowl and mix to fully coat them in dressing.
3. Remove the chicken from the bowl and cut into pieces. Skewer the chicken and zucchini.
4. Place the skewers on the grill on high for three minutes on all sides, then put the grill on low and close the lid, rotating sides every couple minutes.
5. One minute before removing the kebabs, use six of the lemon quarters to sprinkle lemon juice. Finish by adding salt and pepper. Once the chicken is fully browned, remove the kebabs.
6. Drop the last two lemon quarters into iced water or tea. Can be served with brown rice or quinoa.



My Health, My Care: 24/7 ^{Online} Access to VA

To register, please call Kristi Scott, MyhealthVet Coordinator, at 916-843-7108 or email her at Kristi.Scott@va.gov

Connect with VA Northern California Health Care System

Valley Division—Sacramento VA Medical Center
10535 Hospital Way
Mather, CA 95655
916-843-7000 | 800-382-8387

East Bay Division—Martinez Outpatient Clinic
150 Muir Road
Martinez, CA 94553
925-372-2000 | 800-382-8387

Call Center

800-382-8387 Mon–Fri 7 a.m.–6 p.m.

Prescription Refills

Automated Telephone Refill System: 1-866-600-VARX (1-866-600-8279) Toll-Free